

Consultant 57

3 February 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb

I am a [✂] who works at The Portland Hospital and I am getting in touch to implore the Competition Commission to reconsider its recent recommendation that HCA sells two of its hospitals.

My primary reasoning for this is the fact that, without the HCA 'muscle' behind the standalone private hospitals, they simply would not have the funds and infrastructure required to support wards which may not be profitable, but do offer an important service for patients. For example, in 2010 the birthing unit at the Hospital of St John's and St Elizabeth's was forced to close down, partially due to reduced demand in the economic recession. The Portland, with backing from HCA, has thrived during the same period. Healthcare cannot be run purely for profit, and HCA do not seek to do so.

Additionally, the services provided by HCA at The Portland are fundamental to ensuring the highest quality care for our patients. For instance, the HCA support a 24-hour lab which allows the hospital to immediately test a baby's bilirubin level as soon as they start to show signs of jaundice, giving us the best possible chance to treat the patient before it results in brain damage. Again, had it not been for the support The Portland receives as a result of being part of the HCA group this infrastructure would not be possible and our ability to treat newborns would be diminished.

As a consultant at a HCA hospital I feel lucky to have the support of the establishment behind me, with the increased power and greater depth of services that it allows. Removing hospitals from this support network will, I believe only have negative impact on how well each hospital can treat its patients.